



# Thunderbolt



June 2004

## A NOTE FROM THE BATTALION COMMANDER

DEAR THUNDERING THIRD BATTALION FAMILIES,

As you all know by now, the battalion has moved back to the Haditha area. Things have quieted significantly since our last newsletter, as I am sure everyone has been following in the media. We are encouraged by efforts on part of the Iraqis to solve their own security issues. Your Marines are working hard and remaining focused on the tasks at hand.

We have been given more resolution on our leaving Iraq and returning to the United States. 1st Marine Division has given us the tentative flight window of 11 to 17 July for our movement from Iraq back to Twenty-nine Palms. The current plan in place has the Battalion going briefly to Kuwait and then to March Air Force Base, California before loading buses and returning to the Combat Center in Twenty-nine Palms. We do not expect to get many more details than that until around the end of June. As soon as we know something, we will be getting the word out through the KVN.

I know you are as excited as we are about reuniting with friends and loved ones after a long and, at times, challenging deployment. Our Marines are continuing to focus on their mission at hand and will not let our excitement about coming home distract us from conducting our mission professionally and safely. I know that as the time comes closer, there will be more and more questions such as block leave, PCS orders and other important post-deployment issues. We do not have those details yet, but intend to work those issues and publish responses as soon as possible.

Once again I find myself asking for your patience and to share your courage with each other as we deal with uncertain time schedules and unknown circumstances. I do so knowing that we have an indomitable support base at home that has weathered the most challenging of times and continued to excel. Your continued support has been the secret to our Battalion's success and will never be able to be properly recognized. Thank you for all that you do.

Semper Fidelis,

Bryan McCoy



# KV Advisor

## KV Coordinator



Hello 3/4 Families,

June and July are going to be busy months for all of us. As we get closer to the long awaited return of our Marines and Sailors the list of things to do keeps getting longer. Reunions after deployments are wonderful occasions and we hope to help you prepare yourself and your family for the return of your loved one. We have two **Reunion Briefs** scheduled in June. This brief will help address some of your questions and concerns as well as help you know what to expect when your husband returns. The brief is extremely important and we hope you will be able to attend one of the two scheduled times. The first will be **June 15<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-4:30pm** at the **Catholic Chapel**. The second will be **June 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:00pm** also at the **Catholic Chapel**.

Also in June we have two Family Events planned. The first is a **Sign Making Party**. Come out and make a sign to welcome your Marine or Sailor Home. The party will be **Sunday June 13<sup>th</sup> from 3:30pm-5:30pm** at the **Base Community Center**. Our second event is a **Pool Party!** Come out and enjoy the warm desert evening on **Sunday June 20<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00pm** at the **Family Pool** on base.

Knowledge is power. Taking the LINKS training package will give you the basic information on the Marine Corps and Navy. All those acronyms your husband throws around will be explained. In addition, the course provides information on the many services available to you. The schedule and phone number are provided below. Take advantage of this great service!

**LINKS Training (phone 830-3705)**

We're always looking for new Key Volunteers. Come be a part of 3/4's information and referral resource. If you are interested in being part of this important group, please note the schedule and phone number below.

**KVN Training (phone 830-4163)**

June 15<sup>th</sup> ~ 17<sup>th</sup> 5:00 ~ 8:00pm

**REMEMBER: Reunion Brief**  
**June 15<sup>th</sup> or June 16<sup>th</sup>**

# HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

All Base extensions are in area code 760

American Red Cross	830-6685
Base Information	830-6000
Career Resource Office	830-7225
Chaplain (Duty)	830-2190
Child Development Center	830-3227
Information and Referral	830-6344
	1-877-727-5300
DEERS/Identification Cards	830-5365
Financial Management	830-7342
Housing	830-6611
Housing Maintenance	830-6528
Legal Assistance	830-6111
Medical Emergency	911
Naval Hospital (appointments)	830-2286
Naval Hospital (pharmacy)	830-2448
Navy Marine Corps Relief Society	830-6323
New Parent Support Program	830-7622
Nurse Advice Line	830-2674
Poison Control	1-800-876-4766
Provost Marshall Office (PMO)	830-6800
Substance Abuse Counseling	830-6376
Tax Center	830-4829
Tricare Service Line	1-800-242-6788
<u>3/4 Remain Behind Office</u>	<u>830-5852/4912</u>
<u>INFORMATION LINE</u>	<u>1-800-759-7602 ext 4</u>
<u>INFORMATION LINE (LOCAL)</u>	<u>830-1538</u>

**3/4 Remain Behind Element (RBE)**

(760) 830-5852/4912

Email: [omb3rdbn4thmar@29palms.usmc.mil](mailto:omb3rdbn4thmar@29palms.usmc.mil)

## RED Cross

- Info needed: Name, Rank, SSN, Unit
- International Red Cross Phone:
- 1-877-272-7337
- Base Red Cross Phone: (760) 830-6685

**MCCS ONESOURCE** Take advantage of this Information service! 1-800-433-6868

- [www.mccsonesource.com](http://www.mccsonesource.com)
  - Login: Marines
  - Password: Semper Fi
  - Choose 29 Palms
  - Sponsors Rank/SSN

## Marine Corps Community Services

- [www.29palms.usmc-mccs.org](http://www.29palms.usmc-mccs.org)

## MCCS Information and Referral

Operating Hours 7:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Time

Local: 830-6344

Toll Free: 1-877-727-5300

# Dealing with the Media

Here are some helpful things to know if you are approached by the media:

- 1) You are not obligated to speak with any member of the media. If you are not comfortable, don't speak with them.
- 2) If you do choose to speak with members of the media, the base Public Affairs Office can assist you during the interview process and help protect your rights and privacy. The phone number is (760) 830-6213
- 3) Remember that our loved ones are watching from afar. If you choose to speak with media, show them the strength and courage of a military wife. Let's not give the enemy any reason to believe that they are defeating the spirit of the American people.

# POSTAL

## H&S Company

Grade Name, USMC  
3/4 H&S Co (Section)  
UIC 39781  
FPO AP 96609-9781

## India Company

Grade Name, USMC  
3/4 I Company (Section)  
UIC 39782  
FPO AP 96609-9782

## Kilo Company

Grade Name, USMC  
3/4 K CO (Section)  
UIC 39783  
FPO AP 96609-9783

## Lima Company

Grade Name, USMC  
3/4 L CO (Section)  
UIC 39784  
FPO AP 96609-9784

## Weapons Company

Grade Name, USMC  
3/4 WPNS CO (Section)  
UIC 39785  
FPO AP 96609-9785

## POSTAL INFORMATION GUIDE

Here's some guidance for proper routing and delivery of mail during the deployment.

Please utilize the addresses here exactly as published, especially the *nine-digit zip code*; **deviation from this will result in serious mail delays or return to sender.**

All mail needs a complete return address and destination mailing address to ensure the most expedient and proper delivery. For force protection purposes, **do not** include the addressee's social security, operation name or geographical location in the mailing address.

Parcels are allowed, they need to be sent **first class or priority**. A customs declaration form is required for all packages. You may obtain this form at the post office.

Mail must be addressed to a specific Marine or Sailor. Mail addressed to "Any Service Member" or "Any Marine" will not be delivered.

**RESTRICTIONS:** The following are prohibited by United States postal regulations and/or by military regulations for mailing to Kuwait and Iraq.

- a. Firearms or weapons of any type, including air guns and toy guns.
- b. Ammunition clips/magazines
- c. Pornography, obscene magazines or videos
- d. Religious materials
- e. Pork or pork by-products of any kind
- f. Alcohol
- g. Fireworks
- h. Chemicals or hazardous materials
- i. Tobacco in excess of 200 grams

**TIP:** Use nylon filament fiber tape to ensure parcels arrive in theater (area of deployment) in one piece.

# Internet Links

## **Marine Corps Family Team Building**

[http://www.usmc-mccs.org/MCFTB/Links/ftb\\_links\\_main.asp](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/MCFTB/Links/ftb_links_main.asp)

## **Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS)**

<http://www.usmc-mccs.org/index.html>

## **Marine Corps Community Services 29 Palms**

<http://www.29palms.usmc-mccs.org/nav/home.htm>

## **Unites States Postal Service Mailing Information**

<http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/2003/html/pb22097/apofpo.html>

## **Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/default.cfm>

## **U.S. Department of Defense Military Health System (TriCare)**

<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/mhshome.aspx>

## **Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)**

For information about your pay, Leave and Earnings Statements or to obtain a W-2.

*Note: You must have signed up for a MyPay account and have a PIN number to access the site.*

<https://www.mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

## **2004 Military Pay Rates**

<http://www.dfas.mil/money/milpay/pay/>

## **U.S. Coast Guard Legal Assistance**

Good information on the Serviceman's Civil Relief Act

<http://www.uscg.mil/legal/la/topics/sscraarticle.htm>

## **Marine Moms website ( Not DOD affiliated )**

<http://www.marinemoms.us/usmc/>

## **3rd Bn 4th Marines**

<https://www.29palms.usmc.mil/fmf/3-4/default.asp>

# General Information

The 29 Palms base community has a wide variety of programs available to assist you during this deployment. The following are only a few examples of the wonderful services and programs currently being offered. For more information on programs, services and agencies both on and off-base please visit the Information and Referral office in the Village Center.

## **Armed Services YMCA Car Seat Program**

Military dependants are eligible to receive a brand new child car seat from the ASYMCA for only \$10! To pick up your car seat you will need to bring your vehicle, your child and your old car seat (if you have one) to the ASYMCA building. Expectant mothers are eligible once you are 8 months pregnant. If you are interested please contact the ASYMCA at 830-7481.

## **Personal Financial Management Program**

Located in bldg. 1551, this program is an invaluable asset for military families to acquire financial management skills and consumer awareness. Individualized and confidential counseling is available in areas such as debt rehabilitation, financial awareness, creditor intervention and consumer education. If you are interested, please contact 830-7342

## **Wills & Powers of Attorney**

The Staff Judge Advocate office can assist you in preparing a will or a special power of attorney to provide for the care of your children if anything should happen to you while your spouse is deployed. It is just as important to have an emergency plan in place for yourself as it is to have one for your marine or sailor. You can reach the SJA office at 830-6111

## **Emergency Childcare**

MCCS and the CDC can provide childcare in emergency situations. If you have a medical emergency, feel like you may be close to hitting your child or are in another emergency situation the CDC can provide short or long term childcare. Contact the CDC at 830-3227 or the Remain Behind Element.

## **Lifelong Learning**

There are a number of educational opportunities available here on base. You can finish high school, take college classes, earn a certificate, or complete an Associate's, Bachelor's even a Master's degree or simply take a class for personal enrichment. The education center can also provide you with information on scholarships and financial aid. Contact the Education Center at 830-6881 for more information.

## **Career Resource Office**

Located in bldg. 1428, the Career Resource Office can help you with resume preparation, interview techniques and other means to move up in your current career or re-enter the work force. They even have computer training and certification programs. Contact the Career Resource Office at 830-7225 for more information.

## **Exceptional Family Member Program**

The EFMP is designed to provide assistance to active duty families with a family member who may require special medical or educational services. This program will help insure that you will have access to the care and services you require. For more information please call 830-7740.

# Operation “ENDURING FAMILIES”

Dear Families,

Here we go again . . . Units from 29 Palms continue to answer the call in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the security of the Pacific Theater in Okinawa. Those remaining behind also have an extremely important mission and Marine Corps Community Services is here to support. Operation Enduring Families is an MCCS initiative designed to coordinate the various agencies here aboard base and in the local community to better support those remaining behind. Make no mistake, the well being of families is an important factor in the readiness of our Marines and Sailors deployed overseas. Marines and Sailors must be able to focus on the mission at hand when they deploy and knowing you are OK is essential to this. **YOU ARE IMPORTANT.**

You hold the key to your own well being – participation. Get involved with the myriad of activities here aboard base and take advantage of all there is to offer. While every situation is different, it makes sense to remain in the area because of all the support and information available. MCCS, your remain behind unit representative, Key Volunteers and other families experiencing the same separation are here to support. Together, we'll make Operation Enduring Families a success.

Sincerely,  
Daisy M. Dedeaux

## **Care Package Mailing Days – Monthly (June 17, July 15)**

***POC: (Business Ops), 830-6163***

- Exchange to provide Polaroid camera and film for free family pictures to send in care package.
- Applies to all deployed service members on UDP to Okinawa or participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- Exchange to provide FREE shipping up to 10 pounds.
- Exchange to provide FREE materials to pack up the care package-boxes, tape, labels, etc...
- Hours of operation are 10:00am ~ 6:00pm
- One (1) package per authorized family member, per day. Address must be printed in BLOCK letters and package must have a customs declaration form attached, which will be provided on site. All packages must be addressed to a specific individual.

## **Newsletter**

***POC: (Marketing) 830-5053***

- MCCS publishes the Super Flyer every three weeks featuring promotional events and programs designed specifically for “Operation ENDURING FAMILIES”.
- Base housing residents receive the flyer automatically. OFFBASE RESIDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SIGN UP AT THE INFORMATION BOOTH AT THE MCX OR ONLINE AT [www.29palms.usmc-mccs.org](http://www.29palms.usmc-mccs.org)
- The newsletter will include helpful articles, pictures from events, coupons, drawings and more.

## **Information Booth and Stands**

***POC: (Community Support), 830-8456***

- MCCS employees will man an information booth in the MCX to answer questions and distribute informational materials for “Operation Enduring Families”.
- Monday-Friday 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.
- Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Info Stands will be located at the MCX, Naval Hospital and Commissary.

# Letter to a Military Wife

While I have never had the pleasure of meeting you or your husband, I felt the need to write you and express a very deep feeling that I have in my heart.

I, as a person, am not brave. I do not tackle things head on, as I hate confrontation. I will travel 100 miles out of my way just to avoid a conflict. I am an American woman that has no idea what is going on in the military other than what I hear on the news. I have never had to let go of someone so that they could go fight for people that they didn't know, people that sometimes do not appreciate or understand what they are fighting for.

I have never had a sleepless night of worry because of a report that another bomb has exploded and I still haven't heard from my husband.

I have never had to wait for months on end to hold the one that I loved so.

I have never had to tell my children that daddy wasn't coming home tonight because he was so far away fighting for something that they aren't yet old enough to understand.

I have never had to hold my head high and suppress the tears as I hear that it will be at least another six months of separation before my loved one gets to come home.

I have never had to deal with a holiday away from the one that I thought I would share every day of my life with.

And I have never had to feel the panic rising in my heart at the sound of a ringing phone or knock at the door for fear that it is the news that everyone is terrified of getting.

For the reasons listed above, I cannot tell you that I understand how you feel. I cannot tell you that you must be strong. I cannot say that you shouldn't be angry, because you "knew what you were getting into when you married a military man." I cannot say these things because I have never had to walk in your shoes.

What I can say for certain is that because of your unselfish acts of bravery and your husbands willingness to stand up for those who see him as "just another soldier" - - I will never have to walk in your shoes.

I do understand that as a military wife you are expected to uphold a certain amount of control, but I never understood how you could do it, until now. I have figured out that you are not like other women. You are of a special breed. You have a strength within you that holds life together in the darkest of hours, a strength of which I will never possess. The faith you have is what makes you stand out in a crowd; it makes you glow with emotion and swell with pride at the mention of The United States of America.

You are a special lady, a wonderful partner and a glorious American. I have more respect for your husband than I could ever tell you, but until recently I never thought much about those that the soldier leaves at home during deployment.

Until this moment I could never put into words exactly what America meant to me.

Until this moment, I had no real reason to.... Until I heard of you.

Your husband and his military family hold this nation close, safe from those who wish to hurt us...but you and those like you are the backbone of the American family. You keep the wheels in motion and the hearts alive while most would just break completely down. Military families make this nation what it is today.

You give us all hope and you emit a warming light at the end of a long dark tunnel.

Because of you and your family...I am able to be me. I am able to have my family. I am able to walk free in this great land.

Because of you and your family, I can look ahead to the future with the knowledge that life is going to be okay. Because of you and your family, I can awake to a new day, everyday.

I realize that you are a stronger person than I will ever be because of these things and I just wanted to take the time today to say thank you to you and your family for allowing me that freedom.

I will never be able to repay this debt to you, as it is unmatchable. However, I hope that you know that no matter where you are...what you are doing...what has happened today...or what will happen tomorrow...Your husband will NEVER be "just another soldier" to me.... And you, dear sweet lady, will never be forgotten. You are all in my prayer's everyday and I pray that God will bring you back together with your loved one safely.

May God Bless You!